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Letter, 1912, Harriet Taylor Upton to Dear Friend [Martha McClellan Brown]

Harriet Taylor Upton

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Warren, Ohio, 1912.

DEAR FRIEND :

Under the present pressure at state headquarters, it is impossible for me, the one officer on duty here, to answer promptly all communications, hence, I am printing a letter containing answers to general questions. Special instructions for special cases will be sent later.

With only three months in which to reach a million voters we all realize that there is no time to be lost.

To the question "What can we do?" I reply—secure as many votes as possible for woman suffrage. If you get only a few, remember one FOR overcomes one AGAINST.

If you live in the country divide your community into districts and see that some woman interviews every voter in that district. The rural telephone makes this work less laborious than formerly. If you live in a city, gather together a number of women, divide your city into precincts and assign a woman to each one. She in turn may divide her district into streets or even blocks and thus lighten the labor. There may be a regular organization known as The Woman Suffrage Party or Campaign Committee with a chairman or leader; subordinate officers may have other names—captain, lieutenant, &c. This will be at the option of those working. The main thing is to get out the vote.

You may make arrangements for meetings and the state will send you a speaker when such arrangements are made. Such meetings must be at a time when men can attend, since men alone can vote.

You may request factory managers to allow you to speak at the noon hour when you can explain the suffrage question. You must speak yourself, whether you have ever spoken or not. Wherever men are gathered, go and ask for a few minutes to address them.

Find out how your ministers stand and if enough are favorable, go to one of their meetings and ask them to endorse woman suffrage. Do not do this unless you have assurance that you will probably get endorsement.

Distribute literature. Stand at the door of the opera house or like places when people are going in or coming out and hand out literature or send literature by mail.

Gather together a group of influential men and form a man's league for woman suffrage.

Secure the names of a number of women who will speak for woman suffrage and be on the alert for meetings and send these women to them. Such speakers, if they crowd in on the program, must be careful not to take much time.

Often in communities there are elderly people of means who cannot work but who will give money. Attempt to interest them, or if you think a letter from a state officer would be more effective than a request from a home body, send name to headquarters.

City people can make arrangements for outdoor meetings in suburbs and sometimes can have a special car with banners flying. If not able to proceed with such plans go in groups and speak in the parks or in other public places. Do not think because there are only a few present that you have not done good. Always take collection at such meetings. To be sure you often get but little, but it all helps with car fare and postage.

Automobile trips are most effective, as you can do a number of towns a day, and driving through the country with a decorated automobile attracts attention.

City people ought to have street meetings three times a week during May and June.

If picnics and Chautauquas begin before the vote is taken, see that there are speakers there.

Some rural people are already planning to tack up VOTES FOR WOMEN placards on fences, telegraph poles, etc. This plan can be enlarged and larger signs placed along the railroads. For instance, a large sign with VOTES FOR WOMEN, or, OHIO THE SEVENTH, would attract the attention of men traveling.

In California the auto trips often included a boy choir whose suffrage songs added to the program.

Every town which has a celebration on the Fourth of July, must be provided with some sort of a suffrage demonstration.

Subscribe for Woman's Journal, Boston, Mass.

Suffrage literature can be left at every door in your town or city; it can also be left in railroad and interurban stations.

German communities wanting speakers who speak the German language can be supplied.

Try to get at least one member of the graduating class from your school to have an essay or oration on woman suffrage.

Try to get your minister to preach at least one sermon on suffrage.

Be patient with all who do not agree with you. Never lose your temper. We can afford to be pleasant. Talk to everybody as if he or she believed. Never admit a man or woman is opposed.

Telephone items of neighborhood news to your papers. Keep them under obligations to you, then put in suffrage items when you can. Send them news—there is plenty of suffrage news. Never give them arguments.

Think for yourself what to do and then do it. It may be hard, but it's your duty. We have a chance of a lifetime. Let us make the most of it. To be able to vote for president in 1912 is well worth working for.

Write me of your success or failures. No one person can do all of these things, but every person can do some one of them.

Cordially,

HARRIET TAYLOR UPTON,
President Ohio Woman Suffrage Association.

